

BLOOMINGTON ARTS COMMISSION (BAC)

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June 12, 2013 meeting, McCloskey Conference Room

ATTENDING: Peter Jacobi, Paul Sturm, Jean Kautt , Martina Celerin, Mary Norman, Lynn Schwartzberg, Jan Grant, Alain Barker, Sally Gaskill, Abby Henkel

ABSENT: Craig Widen

EX OFFICIO: Miah Michaelson (City staff liaison)

Jan Grant called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

none

APPROVAL OF MINUTES from May 9, 2013

Jan expressed thanks for the email reports. Motion by Peter to approve minutes; second by Abby; motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT – report by Craig via email.

Unchanged from last month

STAFF REPORTS – reports by Miah.

As per the email, and in addition Miah told us that BUEA is accepting applications. Jean is on the board and helps with the selection process. There will be \$12,000 available in this round. Miah encourages us to thank the members of the BUEA board for collaborating with the BAC.

OLD BUSINESS – reports by Miah

Miah updated us that the Lotus project is on hold until 2014. They have many events happening this year and are experiencing both time and funding crunches. The sculpture will go forward but the scope and the location might change.

Lynn said that she spoke with Marcy Neidtz about the school/ceramic sculpture project. Marcy said that she really enjoyed working on the projects but mentioned that artists struggle with making a living when trying to combine working on their livelihood with doing a community-involved public piece of art.

Miah mentioned that she presented at an event in Madison. She noted that by not having a multi-disciplinary arts council in Bloomington we don't have artists as community conveners and community problem solvers. She mentions that PAMP could address how artists are utilized to speak about community issues. Alain reminded us to remember that there are also two parts to this town, the city and IU, and that currently IU people have no mechanism in place on campus to creatively and meaningfully engage in discussions with the city.

Jan asked to be updated with what was happening with the modifications to the Cardinal Stage grant application. Miah explained that she sent the information but hasn't heard back from them yet. Alain suggested that we consider having a hard deadline perhaps one week before the July meeting. Jan added that we should ask for clarification about where they are in the process i.e. if they don't want the money please let us know.

NEW BUSINESS**Focus Topic**

For this month's focus topic Jan suggested that we go through aspects of the grant review process. There are some technical modifications we should consider, including an explanation of what "in-kind" means and what we mean specifically by "outcomes." It was also suggested that there might be a better place to describe the actual project. Regarding "in kind," Jean suggested that we give some examples. Regarding

"outcomes" it was suggested that we use a different term, maybe "results?" Martina suggested that we include a list of definitions at the end of the grant application. Some commissioners thought that this should be self-evident. Jean pointed out that there are many emerging artists who could apply for the grant and we should take this as an opportunity to teach them something about the process. After much discussion Jan suggested that it sounds like "outcome" is a good word but it needs to be defined. It was pointed out that we need to have our applicants think more strategically about their project. Lynn mentioned that we could consider separating "outcomes" from "description of the project."

The second focus topic that Jan presented was, "Why are we here?" This is a big question that includes - do we give less money to more people or more money to fewer organizations? What is our purpose? And how does this tie into our mission? Jan suggested that somehow we need to incorporate new projects into the application project funding process - maybe we should earmark some subset of the monies for specifically for new grants. Miah suggested that we consider budgeting based on the size of the organization. Much discussion ensued including considering where our program fits in relative to other grants that are available to organizations. Concern was expressed - the arts commission may be focusing on larger more established organizations and therefore projects by smaller organizations don't get funded. At that point we looked carefully at the mission statement.

The question was put forward - what are we trying to achieve globally? Alain mentioned that we want to maximize our impact and support arts projects that matter to the people of Bloomington. He also pointed out that entities that apply for funds go through an exercise that strengthens the organizations and their projects. By decreasing our engagement we might also go against our mission with these larger organizations. It was noted that 'need' of an organization should not interfere/influence our support of what Bloomington audiences want. The question was put forward, "do we need to consider 'need' as a primary driver of funding?"

It was suggested that maybe we need to take more time after tallying the scores to decide on a cut-off point. Abby mentioned that she was glared at after giving a low score. Alain felt that we are getting better at scoring based on the proposal. Lynn suggested that we look at the scoring data graphically for clusters of scores, and then use that info to determine the cutoff score. It was also suggested that we vote on a cutoff point for the scoring. Miah asked if we were interested in clustering based on budget size; we are comparing \$500 and \$500,000 budgets in the same group. Miah also pointed out that most organizations ask for roughly the same amount of money and maybe we should give money based on the project size. Martina pointed out that budget size does not necessarily reflect the quality of the project. Lynn mentioned that for many organizations a thousand dollars is as important as \$10,000 for an organization. It was mentioned that the budget that is presented for consideration should be the budget for the project. Miah asked if we are happy with the current scope of projects. Alain noted that some grants are funding 50% of the projects while others we are funding only 5% of the project, are we comfortable with that? Lynn pointed out that some organizations have our money as a part of their budget and it's more of a "good housekeeping seal" but for others it's an absolutely critical part of their budget. Abby pointed out that it's great that we have this variety of different impacts and it's not necessarily a bad thing. Jan noted that in some cases our funding is really life or death for the project. Abby asked 'is that a problem?' Peter pointed out that we are kick-starting some of the projects and if we don't fund them, the project wouldn't happen. Miah pointed out that one of the organizations had to cancel their open print night because they did not get funded. She reminded us that we should think of each project as a unique opportunity to get diversity in Bloomington and to remember what is really important is the actual project. Peter pointed out that it's very important to see the package as part of a panorama of Bloomington. There was further discussion about determining the cut-off point for funding projects. Jan asked if we have to make that decision in public. Miah said that we could score everything on an Excel sheet and then make the cut off decision at a later date, maybe a week later. Peter noted out that we need to be flexible with the cut off point because in different situations a higher or lower one might be more appropriate. Alain mentioned that we should aim for more support. Lynn noted that if we are giving bigger grants with more hoops for organizations to jump through, then it really must be a meaningful amount of money that they are awarding. Lynn proposed potentially throwing out the highest and lowest scores for an organization. Alain noted that we are too small of a group not to include those scores. Jean said that she was amazed at how consistent the scoring is and how related it is to the quality of the project. Paul noted that if someone can justify an extreme score then that is valid. Additionally, Paul proposed presenting three different cut off scores to the commissioners for us to

evaluate. Jan summed up the discussion and concluded that we will probably continue in the process similarly to how we have been doing it, but extend the time to decide on the cutoff score. Alain added that this could be accomplished that by an electronic vote by the commissioners. Miah mentioned that there is more to discuss in this area and we should continue this conversation in July and August. Jan noted that this is an opportunity for artists and organizations to understand the sincerity of the process. She reminded us to be mindful of the dynamics with the applicants. Also, Jan summarized that in the future the ultimate decision on awarding grants might occur later than during the review process.

Paul asked the long-term question about funding in the city budget i.e., are we likely to see a cut in the in the art budget fund? Miah suggested that that's not likely, but it's also unlikely that we will be getting more monies any time soon.

Transit Center Update

The transit board voted to accept our recommendations. Miah is in the process of drafting contracts which should be going out in about four weeks. These would include a \$500 design fee. It is still unclear how we, the BAC NPC can weigh in on the actual design i.e. what our final role will be. Transit is happy with how the processes going forward. Lynn mentioned that she was in Columbus, Indiana recently and saw the "C" shaped bike racks. They are powder coated and vary in color. Lynn asked if we can do that...and Miah said "maybe." Miah also mentioned that the monies from the fourth commission are being used to help pay for the final proposal funding (the \$500 design fee). The non-acceptance letters went out recently and they will include feedback. Miah also noted that the BT is about 1 1/2 months behind schedule; currently, they are predicting late March/early April for the opening opening. Alain asked if there was any information about why Maria Heslin was leaving the Office of the Mayor. Miah mentioned that she was going back to her marketing business and will be teaching at IU. Sally asked about County Council's discussions regarding the tax for funding the Convention Center expansion. Miah suggested that likely there won't be a vote before July, and will ask Talisha and Mike to come and talk to us. Miah also mentioned that Maarten Bout is stepping down at the BCT and will be taking a position in Indianapolis with Indy Baroque.

Meeting was adjourned by Jan at 6:30 PM

Respectfully submitted by Martina Celerin